

**Interstate 95 Travel Corridor –  
RIEDC Office, Quonset Davisville  
July 24, 2003 from 6:30 to 10:00 p.m.  
including I-195, I-295 and Route 10**

This workshop was conducted somewhat differently from the other six in that there was no workshop for local planners held prior to the public workshop. The reason for this is that the study area for the I-95 corridor covers nearly the entire state, and enough information was provided by the local planners at the other 6 workshops to convey an understanding of the highway interchanges in those communities. This public workshop was held as part of the regular monthly meeting of the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC), and invitations were sent to municipal planners. The TAC is a diverse group representing many transportation, economic, and environmental interests as well as cities and towns. Additionally, the Connecticut Department of Transportation sent staff members to present the proposed widening of I-95 in southeast Connecticut to 3 lanes in each direction up to the Rhode Island border.

**Workshop Participants**

Workshop participants included the Transportation Action Committee, Statewide Planning staff, Connecticut Department of Transportation, and the general public.

**Who are the users of Interstates 95, 195, 295 and Route 10?**

- Truckers
- Commuters
- Vacationers
- Local residents/shoppers

**How are Interstates 95, 195, 295 and Route 10 used?**

- Commuting to work and school
- Transporting of goods
- Through traffic – regional travel
- Local traffic – short trips
- Recreation – beaches etc.
- Emergency and medical services

**What are the other modes of transportation available within this Corridor?**

- Rail – Amtrak and MBTA (Providence only); freight rail
- Ferry
  - Newport/Providence
  - Highspeed to Quonset/Martha's Vineyard
- Buses (including Park and Ride facilities)
- Bicycles
- Air Transport
  - Freight
  - Passenger

### What are the positive attributes of Interstates 95, 195, 295 and Route 10?

- Makes commuting easier
- Reduces traffic on local roads
- Safer than older, local roads
- Saves travel time
- Enhances business environment
- Intermodal options exist
- Facilitates more efficient movement of trucks and goods to and from other states
- Its existence has allowed for the funneling of enhancement funds for other modes/projects (i.e. bikes, recreation)
- National defense and emergency response

### Location of Major Transportation and Land-Use Issues within I-95 Corridor

To initiate the workshop, participants were given 2 red dots and 2 blue dots to pinpoint, on an aerial map of this Corridor, the Transportation and Land-Use issues respectively. The resulting “dot” map provided a visual representation of the dispersion of transportation and land-use issues within the Corridor. The following two charts enumerate the location of these Transportation and Land-Use issues.

#### Location of Transportation Issues

Corridor – Highway	Location in Corridor (closest exit identified)	Number of ‘dots’ placed in location area
I-95	‘S’ curve in Pawtucket	3
	Civic Center/Providence Place Mall/Route 146	8
	‘S’ curve at Thurbers Avenue in Providence and I-195 East	11
	Route 10 Interchange (Exit 16)	1
	Route 37/Jefferson Blvd (Exit 14/15)	4
	Route 295 (Exit 11/12)	5
	Centerville Road (Exit 10)	2
	Route 4 & I-95 connection (Exit 9)	10
	Route 78 (Exit 2)	2
	Hopkinton/Connecticut Border (Exit 1)	1
I-295	Route 114/Diamond Hill Road (Exit 11)	2
	Route 146 (Exit 10)	1
	Cranston/West Warwick line (Between Exits 2 and 3)	1
Route 138	Route 1/Route 138/North Kingstown	1
	Route 1/Kingston Village	1
	Newport Bridge Toll Plaza	1

### Location of Land-Use Issues

Corridor – Highway	Location/Interchange (closest exit identified)	Number of 'dots'
I-195	Recovered land from move of I-195/India Point Area	2
I-295	Routes 6 and 295 (Exit 5/6)	3
	Route 5 - no interchange with I-295	1
	Route 44/Shopping Center (Exit 7)	1
	Route 7 – Bryant/Fidelity/Dow (Exit 8)	2
	Route 12 - Cranston/Scituate border	1
I-95	Central Falls (Exit 26/27)	2
	Providence Hospitals (Exit 20)	2
	Route 37 to Route 2	1
	Jefferson Blvd. to new rail station area (Exit 14/15)	4
	Route 2 – Warwick/West Warwick town line	2
	Route 2 – Medical Complex – East Greenwich	2
	Route 2 - West Warwick Industrial Park (proposed casino location)	2
	Coventry, Center of New England (Exit 7)	2
	Coventry/West Greenwich GTech, Amgen (Exit 6A)	1
	West Greenwich (Exit 5)	1
	Richmond (Exit 3/4)	6
	Hopkinton (Exit 2)	1
	Hopkinton (Exit 1)	1
Route 4	Quonset	2
	Route 403	1
	Routes 4/102/2	2
	Ten Rod Road (Walmart/Home Depot/Shaws)	
Route 138	University of Rhode Island	1

### Discussion of the Major Issues within I-95, I-195, I-295 and Route 10

Prompted by the aerial map “dot” placement exercise, the ensuing discussions resulted in the identification of specific issues pertaining to **Transportation Issues**, **Land-Use Issues** and **Community Impact**.

#### TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

##### Safety Issues

- **Striping** needs improvement
- Too many **trucks exceeding weight limits**. Need enforcement of weight restrictions
- **Civic Center Interchange** at Providence Place Mall/Francis Street: **Difficult environment for pedestrians, motorists, and buses**. Problematic intersection with pedestrian crosswalk at base of I-95 Interchange ramps

- **Two “S” Curves:** Pawtucket and Thurbers Avenue in Providence. Curvature dictates speed limit, otherwise an adverse event is likely. Trucks with shifting loads exacerbate the likelihood of an adverse event. **Traffic is too fast** and there is a **lack of sight lines**
- **Lighting:** Lack of **lighting maintenance** on overhead lights on I-95 on the highway itself as well as the entrance ramps

#### **I-95 – General**

- I-95 is **used as a local road** for short trips. Are there too many interchanges?
- I-95 in **Connecticut is increasing to three (3) lanes** and Rhode Island remaining at two lanes. The tapering point in Connecticut is not determined but there is potential for a bottleneck condition. Additionally, the **impact on Rhode Island's Route 3** is not determined. Connecticut consultant states that volume at Rhode Island border is less than anywhere else on Connecticut's portion of I-95.
- The shoulder is used as a travel lane by vehicles headed southbound on I-295 at the I-95 merge that exit to Route 117 West. Is another lane needed for this short segment?
- South of the Route 4 and I-95 split, I-95 southbound drops the right lane before Exit 8 to Route 2 in East Greenwich. The lane drop should occur after the exit rather than before
- **Quonset Industrial Park** (job source)
  - How will existing infrastructure handle
    - **Access to I-95/Completion Route 403**
    - Growth in **commuter traffic**
    - **Volume increases** on highway/transportation system for **freight**

#### **I-95/Route 4**

- **Congestion** at interchange of **Route 4 and I-95 in all directions**
- **Route 4 South:** It is perceived by some that the **left exit for Route 4 off of I-95** South from Providence has poor signage and not enough warning for through-traffic in left lanes to switch to right lanes to avoid **Route 4 Exit** and continue of I-95 South
- **No fluid movement from Route 4 North to I-95 South or I-95 North to Route 4 South.** This is an entrance and egress problem for trucks and commuter traffic to and from Quonset Davisville

#### **I-295**

- **I-295 lanes shifts from 3 to 2 lanes** where traffic increases in Johnston south of the Route 6 interchange. This is a **safety and capacity issue**.
- **I-295 North, after the Route 37 interchange,** has a steep incline that is difficult for trucks to climb. Needs a **“truck-climbing lane”**.
- I-295: **Speeding** is a problem; **enforcement** is needed

#### **I-195**

- **Washington Bridge:** With the **closing of the Gano Street entrance** onto the Washington Bridge, the **Henderson Bridge detour needs improved signage** to re-route traffic from the East Side onto I-195

### Route 10

- **Traffic regulations need enforcement.** Lanes are too narrow; **speeding** and **tailgating** are problems

### Rail

- Amtrak **fares** are **too high for local commutes** and short trips.
- **Lack of local commuter rail**
- Planning is necessary for **regional rail transportation** and the interconnecting of rail lines. **Improve access to rail connections** linking Rhode Island with neighboring states requires regional planning

### Bus

- **Limited and slow bus service** from the Providence metropolitan **area to South County and beaches** is a factor contributing to low ridership
- **Demand for bus service to New Haven** should be evaluated

### Signage

- There is an overall need for **upgrading of signage** along I-95 Corridor.
- **T.F. Green:** Some signs need improvements. In addition to existing directional signage to New York and Boston, should local destinations such as Providence and Newport be added?
- Improved signage is needed rerouting **Washington Street Bridge** traffic to **Henderson Bridge** and onto I-195 in East Providence. This **detour has poor signage** and can be very confusing
- **Entrance to Rhode Island: message and image**

The Interstate highway system presents **5 Gateways** into Rhode Island:

**I-295 in Cumberland**

**I-95 in Pawtucket**

**I-95 in Hopkinton**

**I-195 in East Providence**

**T.F. Green – Airport Connector**

*What message and image should these gateways convey about Rhode Island?*

### Aesthetics

- Overall consideration should be given to the '**image**' that is conveyed by Rhode Island particularly at interchanges and **Gateways**
- Improve interchanges to **preserve pristine vistas** where they still exist
- **Restore aesthetic quality to highways and interchanges** through plantings and landscaping where sites are degraded
- **Signage** should be **improved** with consideration given to aesthetics and positive guidance throughout the Corridor
- **Jersey barriers** and **sound barriers** should be **attractive**

### LAND USE ISSUES

- **Interstate** highways should be considered part of the **infrastructure system; they enable and encourage growth and development.** Local communities need to **plan** in order to **direct** and **control the growth and economic**

**development** in these areas. Communities have to **create a vision** of how they want these interchanges to develop and **plan for interchange development accordingly**

- **Interchange development** is all starting to **look the same**. Gas stations and fast food restaurants should not dominate the off-ramp landscapes of Rhode Island's Interstate interchanges. Where it still exists, **the rural character needs to be preserved and showcased**
- Local **property tax needs change** so that communities will not approve **sprawl commercial development** to off-set local revenue demands.
- Need **regional planning to reduce redundant big-box development along major highways and at interchanges**
- Any **State Property** along Interstate Corridor should be held for **buffering** the highways to **improve aesthetics** and **preserve open space**.
- **Standards** should be developed **for buffers** along interstates.
- With development pressure increasing in Massachusetts and Connecticut, it is crucial that **Rhode Island be prepared** to assess the state and regional **impact of development**, especially as it relates to transportation and land use. Massachusetts has the **MEPA process** for review of projects above set thresholds. This review requires a regional approach. The **Cape Cod Commission** has the **Development of Regional Impact** review process for projects with impacts beyond municipal borders. Rhode Island should be protected from developers looking for easy permitting. The **Physical Alteration Permit Application** process is insufficient to deal with the full spectrum of environment impacts.
- **Center of New England** – is this the type of development that every town should be pursuing for tax purposes?
- **Center of New England – Impact** of such a large development must be considered in the approval process, i.e., impact on interstate highways, highway ramps, local roads, and **air, water, and visual environments**
- Potential **impact of a casino in West Warwick**
- The **relocation** of **I-195** at the head of Narragansett Bay presents **new land use issues** at India Point and downtown Providence
- Access to I-295 has encouraged **sprawl** and **poor usage of Interstate as a local road**. Additionally, because development is so spread out, it is difficult for RIPTA to service this area efficiently leaving residents with **few transportation options**

## **COMMUNITY IMPACT**

- **Keep Communities intact**. Efforts should be made to **prevent highways** and transportation improvements **from dividing** of communities
- **I-195 relocation** will **separate** Providence from **waterfront**
- **Lack of sound barriers**. Investigate attractive ones such as those used in Holland
- Where there is **greatest congestion**, **air and water quality evaluation is critical**.
- Need to **reduce reliance on cars**
- Pollution caused by Interstate **overhead lighting in rural areas** needs to be balanced with safety concerns

- Local **emergency response** to **Interstate emergencies** is not funded. Need a mechanism to provide **reimbursement**
- **Reduce** the placement of **billboards** along interstate highways
- Overhead utility lines along I-195 in Providence are blight on the city

### Issues Identified by Participants at End of Session

At the conclusion of the visioning session, participants were presented with a list of issues and asked to prioritize them. The following chart represents their priorities.

